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24 January 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Contact Report, AECMBISTA 16

1. On Tuesday, 17 Jan. 1956, from 1400 to 1600, a meeting was held in room 1215 of the Hotel York in New York City between undersigned and AECMBISTA 16 in order to discuss the details of his spotting assignment.

2. Initially, AECMBISTA 16 expressed misgivings about the task, claiming that he had never engaged in conspiratorial endeavors, thus could not hope to be successful. His explanation is, of course, spurious, since only a short talk with him indicates a more than passing acquaintance with conspiratorial techniques. It is clear to the writer that AECMBISTA 16, if he never actively engaged in clandestine operations, has knowledge of particular Byelorussian operations (Kushal's operation of 1947) and of some of the principles of clandestine operations.

As the talk progressed, reasons which were more acceptable in terms of logic and of emotion were brought forth. First, he fears for his status in the emigration and in the EEA. Second, he fears that he will select unsuitable agent candidates, i.e., he fears failure. Third, he feels that he would in effect be "putting the finger on" anybody he pointed out to us. Fourth, underlying all these, is his characteristic of indecisiveness, which he, himself, recognizes and which has hindered his political progress in the Byelorussian emigration.

This case officer answered these objections as they arose because he feels that AECMBISTA 16 shows exceptional promise for spotting activity and is worth the effort spent on his development.

It was impressed on AECMBISTA 16 that immediate results were not expected and that a trial period, of unspecified length, would permit him to test his abilities. Subject agreed and requested a meeting for the first week of March when he could make an initial report.

3. Next

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3. Next we discussed the characteristics of suitable agent candidates -- age, familial ties, area knowledge, intelligence, motivation, physical condition, emotional stability, special skills; then we discussed the sources to which he had access. Subject stated that he had already started a preliminary review of his files, which were most readily available. Nothing positive was as yet forthcoming but he seemed somewhat optimistic. In the next month and a half, subject will be able to observe and assess from his new point of view personal acquaintances who might be suitable candidates. His meetings with leader of the Byelorussian community will provide numerous other opportunities to gather pertinent information. In addition to the subject's sources in and around NYG, he believes that he may be able to provide leads or candidates in South America at some future time.

4. After the briefing, subject brought up the topic of Juri Sienkowski. He related in more detail than on other occasions Sienkowski's experiences in East Germany and Poland. Since the story is complicated and fairly lengthy, he was asked to put it in writing for our March meeting. This he agreed to do. Our interest in Sienkowski is for his potential as an agent and possibly for a debriefing of his part in the Bodine infiltration.

5. After this case officer's first meeting with ASGambista 16, he had formed the tentative opinion that 16 could be developed into an independent spotter. On the basis of this second, more intensive discussion, the evidence is quite to the contrary. ASGambista 16's adult life has been spent in advancing the interests of the BNR, and, although he is disaffected with some aspects of the organization, he still considers BNR his primary group. It would be unrealistic to expect him to shed the loyalties of a lifetime in the few short months that he has been connected with SR/3. Any leads that are immediately forthcoming from subject will probably be individuals who are thoroughly oriented to BNR.

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